

Ulm University Sustainability Strategy

Sustainability is one of the most important social issues of the coming decades. The advancing climate change, the dwindling of certain species and the continuously increasing depletion of resources present humankind with major challenges and necessitate a comprehensive societal transformation process, not only at a national or international level, but also at a local level. As a university, we are determined to do our part in shaping the future in a sustainable way. Ulm University sets out its strategic goals in the area of sustainability in this Sustainability Strategy, which was passed by the University Senate on 15 November 2023.

Universities are key players in this process due to their social obligation and must therefore take on a variety of responsibilities. Through their **research**, which is spread across various subject areas, they contribute to a deeper understanding of the ecological consequences of our individual and institutional behaviour and economic activity, on the one hand, and on the other hand, they open up opportunities for facing these challenges with technical and social innovations. Research at universities results in further obligations for the university as a place of scientific discourse. After all, scientific liberty always entails a responsible reflection of one's own goals and actions within a social context. This leads to fields of action in the area of education for sustainable development (ESD). Within the scope of **teaching**, universities have the opportunity to pass on aspects of sustainability to the younger generation, thus imparting a kind of sustainability literacy. Since about 50% of the students in a specific year now go on to study at a university or university of applied sciences, this potential cannot be overstated. Universities can use their **transfer** activities to spread knowledge of sustainability throughout the general public and actively participate in regional transformation processes. Sustainable technological developments can either be introduced at businesses through technology transfer, or serve as a basis for green start-ups. Sustainability knowledge and skills are passed on to society via professional training or other suitable formats. At the same time, universities are faced with the task of ensuring that their own **operations** are sustainable. With the strategic goal of sustainability and climate protection, Ulm University is also pursuing the goal of attracting new first-year students as well as employees.

Our understanding of sustainability

In this Sustainability Strategy, the University follows an institutional approach in which it addresses all core processes of its own activities (research, teaching, transfer, operations, governance). All members of Ulm University should be given the opportunity to participate in this process. We base our understanding of sustainability on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thus including the ecological, social and economic aspects of sustainability. In our Sustainability Strategy, we link individual goals and fields of action to the 17 SDGs, thereby highlighting Ulm University's contribution to implementing the overarching goals set out in the German Sustainable Development Strategy. We define measures of implementation for the individual fields of action and make these transparent in our sustainability reporting.

Objectives and Fields of Action: Governance

Objective

Ulm University sees sustainability and climate protection as important goals in its activities.

Fields of action

Ulm University ...

1. implements suitable structures for achieving its sustainability goals.
2. promotes the participation and commitment of university members in the area of sustainability.
3. is establishing a Sustainable Development Office / Green Office to coordinate sustainable development initiatives on the campus.
4. communicates its activities in the area of sustainable development and climate protection and is committed to regular reporting.
5. is involved in international, national and regional sustainable development networks in a university and social context.

Objectives and Fields of Action: Research

Objective

The research established at Ulm University contributes to the achievement of SDGs. This research is innovative, often interdisciplinary and in some cases also transdisciplinary. At the same time, we are aware that the research process itself is also energy and resource-intensive and leads to further impacts on sustainable development. We are committed to making our own research increasingly sustainable.

Fields of action

Ulm University ...

1. promotes reflection on sustainable development and the sparing use of resources in research.
2. creates suitable networking formats for linking research on sustainable development at the University.
3. promotes transdisciplinary research and knowledge transfer on the topic of sustainable development.
4. organises face-to-face courses in a way that is climate friendly and sustainable.

Addressed SDGs



SDG3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy.

SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

SDG9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

SDG12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

SDG 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.

Objectives and Fields of Action: Teaching and Education for Sustainable Development

Objective

Ulm University strives to enable its students to develop ways of thinking and approaches to action that are oriented on sustainable development, in order to make a positive contribution to solving global challenges. All members of Ulm University should be given the opportunity to develop a basic understanding of sustainability within the scope of their studies or work.

Fields of action

Ulm University ...

1. ensures an inclusive, equitable and high-quality education for all its students with the implementation of the Mission Statement Teaching.
2. ensures free access to knowledge for the general public with its institutions.
3. increases the visibility of courses relating to sustainable development.
4. offers courses on sustainable development for students of all degree programmes.
5. qualifies lecturers and staff members to integrate the topic of sustainable development into their teaching.
6. ensures networking and interdisciplinary cooperation among the lecturers as well as between lecturers and students.

Addressed SDGs

Ulm University pursues the goal of high-quality education in general and especially in the area of sustainable development. It thus follows SDG 4 on high-quality education in particular. In doing so, the University makes a contribution to SDG 5 on gender equality not only within the framework of its own operation, but also through its societal function as a role model.



SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Objectives and Fields of Action: Transfer

Objective

As part of the knowledge and technology transfer, Ulm University introduces topics of sustainable development into the general public. The University also works in a transdisciplinary fashion with social stakeholders at eye level on projects to implement sustainability measures.

Fields of action

Ulm University ...

1. shares knowledge on the topic of sustainable development with the general public in a variety of formats.
2. creates an institutionalised framework for exchange with the general public on the topic of sustainable development.
3. incorporates the topic of sustainable development in its start-up funding programme via the Entrepreneurs Campus.
4. is involved in regional transformation processes together with local authorities, businesses and citizens.
5. develops programmes on the topic of sustainable development within the scope of professional continuing education.

Addressed SDGs



SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

SDG 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Objectives and Fields of Action: Operations

Objective

In the area of operations, Ulm University addresses both social and ecological aspects of sustainable development equally. It organises its ongoing operations in terms of active sustainable development management.

Fields of action

Ulm University ...

1. ensures safe, resource-efficient and healthy operation of its facilities in cooperation with the Baden-Württemberg Department of Property and Construction (*Vermögen und Bau Baden-Württemberg*) Ulm Office, thus contributing to sustainable operation.
2. identifies measures for sustainable mobility on campus, in cooperation with the Baden-Württemberg Department of Property and Construction, the City of Ulm and the Ulm Public Utility Company (*Stadtwerke Ulm*).
3. works on sustainable operation and sustainable catering in the food hall and cafeterias, in cooperation with Student Services.
4. sets internal regulations for sustainable procurement within the legal framework of the Baden-Württemberg state procurement guidelines.
5. avoids waste and implements the hierarchy of actions set out in the Closed Substance Cycle Waste Management Act (*Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz, KrWG*) in the sense of a circular economy.
6. is committed to increasing biodiversity on the campus.

Addressed SDGs



SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

SDG 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

SDG 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.

Objectives and Fields of Action: Climate Protection

Objective

Ulm University pursues the goal of achieving greenhouse gas neutrality on its balance sheet by 2030. The aim is to first avoid or reduce greenhouse gas emissions and only then apply compensation measures.

Fields of action

Ulm University ...

1. regularly updates its Energy and Climate Protection Concept.
2. implements a regular balancing of greenhouse gas emissions.
3. identifies and implements construction measures to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in cooperation with the Baden-Württemberg Department of Property and Construction (*Vermögen und Bau Baden-Württemberg*) Ulm Office.
4. takes operational actions to reduce emissions.
5. strives to expand and use renewable energy for its operation, in cooperation with the Baden-Württemberg Department of Property and Construction Ulm Office.

Addressed SDGs



SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Objectives and Fields of Action: Social Sustainability

Objective

Ulm University is strongly committed to the social aspects of sustainable development, such as equal opportunities, gender equality, diversity and good working conditions.

Fields of action

Ulm University ...

1. addresses the social aspects of sustainable development with various activities and guidelines and pursues these accordingly:
 - Mission Statement Gender Equality
 - Family-Friendly University
 - Diversity Charta – for diversity in the workplace
 - Good Work Agreement
 - Occupational health management

Addressed SDGs



SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.